NATION

Grounded British fighter jet to fly back

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BUSINESS

SEBI allows Jane Street to resume trade in India

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SPORTS

Nitish ruled out of Eng tour, Arshdeep unavailable for 4th Test

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈہ روزنامہ بنگلور

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SALAR UPCLOSE

Proud of 'Puneet Hrudaya Jyothi' as health minister: Dinesh Gundu Rao

MOHAMMED YOUSUF

As Karnataka Health Minister, Dinesh Gundu Rao highlights the Puneet Hrudaya Jyothi cardiac arrest response scheme as his most fulfilling initiative, having saved over 200 lives. Since taking charge in 2023, he has reviewed dialysis tendering, banned harmful additives in food, and pushed for tattoo ink regulations. In a conversation with Salar News, he says he takes pride in Karnataka being the first to implement the Supreme Court's 2018 guidelines on the "Right to Die With Dignity". Rao advocates clean energy and is pushing for EVs in public transport to curb pollution. He has revived the Shuchi-Nanna Maitri menstrual cup initiative and enforced transparency in staff transfers.

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7/11 Mumbai train blasts: All 12 accused acquitted

HC says it can't believe the accused committed a crime

MUMBAI, 21 JULY

Nineteen years after multiple train blasts here killed more than 180 persons, the Bombay High Court on Monday acquitted all the 12 accused, saying the prosecution utterly failed to prove the case and it was "hard to believe they committed the crime".

A special bench of Justices Anil Kilor and Shyam Chandak said the prosecution has failed to even bring on record the type of bombs used in the crime and that the evidence relied on by it was not conclusive to convict the accused persons.

The judgement comes as a major embarrassment to the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) which conducted the probe into the case.

The witness statements and alleged recoveries made from the accused have no evidentiary value, the HC said while quashing the conviction of the 12 persons, of whom five had been sentenced to death and seven to life imprisonment by a special court.

"The prosecution has utterly failed to prove the case against the accused. It is hard to believe that the accused committed the crime. Hence their conviction is quashed and set aside," the HC said. "The prosecution has failed to even bring on record the type of bombs used in the alleged crime."

"The accused persons have proved their case that torture was inflicted at the time," the bench said. "The witness statements are not credible or trustworthy. The evidence is not safe to rely on and the defence has succeeded in shattering the same,"

The bench refused to confirm the death penalty and the life imprisonment by a special court in 2015, and acquitted them. The HC said the accused shall be released from jail if not wanted in any other case.

Seven blasts ripped through Mumbai local trains at various locations on 11 July, 2006, killing more than 180 people and injuring several others. —*PTI*

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At least 180 people were killed in the 11 July, 2006 blasts in Mumbai

2006 MUMBAI TRAIN BLASTS CASE

11 JULY, 2006
Seven bomb blasts in first class compartments of seven local trains on western suburban railway line between 6.23 pm and 6.29 pm. 187 people killed and 824 injured.

11 JULY, 2006
Seven FIRs lodged. Later probed by Maharashtra Anti- Terrorism Squad (ATS).

JULY-AUG, 2006
Thirteen people arrested by ATS.

30 NOV, 2006
Chargesheet filed against 30 accused, including 13 Pakistani nationals.

2007 TRIAL BEGINS

- **19 AUGUST, 2014:** Trial ends. Special court reserves its order against 13.
- **11 SEPTEMBER, 2015:** Spl court convicts 12 out of 13. One acquitted due to lack of evidence.
- **30 SEPTEMBER, 2015:** Spl court imposes death penalty on five of the convicted accused. Seven get lifer.
- **OCTOBER 2015:** Maharashtra govt files appeal in Bombay High Court seeking confirmation of death penalty imposed on five. All 12 accused challenge their conviction in HC.
- **JULY 2024:** HC sets up special bench of Justices Anil Kilor and Shyam Chandak to hear case.
- **21 JULY, 2025:** 19 years after blasts, Bombay HC acquits 12 people.

Amid ruckus, govt says will talk Op Sindoor for 16 hrs

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Government on Monday agreed to a 16-hour discussion in the Lok Sabha on Operation Sindoor and Pahalgam terror attack, and it is likely to be taken up next week, even as the Opposition insisted that it should start this week itself and Prime Minister Narendra Modi must reply.

At the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), attended by members of different parties and chaired by Speaker Om Birla, sources said that the government representatives noted that PM Modi is leaving on a foreign visit this week, and a debate when he is present in the House is possible only next week.

The Lok Sabha witnessed noisy scenes soon after the Speaker read out the obituary references as opposition members trooped to the Well of the House seeking to raise the issue of Operation Sindoor and demanding that Modi reply in the House. —*PTI*

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> **This Monsoon session is a very proud session for the country. It is like a 'Vijay Utsav' (celebration of victory) for the nation. The world witnessed the capability of armed forces. They achieved their targets 100 per cent**
>
> —Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

> **The government should clarify its stand on the statement of US President Donald Trump, because he has claimed not once but 24 times that he got the ceasefire done. This is humiliating for the country**
>
> —Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition

Justice Varma faces impeachment

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday said he has received a notice for the removal of High Court Judge Yashwant Varma and asked the Secretary General to take necessary steps. Wads of burnt cash was recovered from the official residence of Justice Varma in Delhi in March this year. He was later transferred to the Allahabad High Court. 63 Opposition members filed the motion with the Rajya Sabha Chairman, and another was submitted to the Lok Sabha Speaker -- a bipartisan effort with 152 members, including Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, supporting the move.

'9 showcause notices sent to AI in 6 months'

A total of nine showcause notices were issued to Air India in connection with five identified safety violations in the last six months and enforcement action has been completed with respect to one violation, the civil aviation ministry said in the Rajya Sabha. This comes after the Air India's Boeing 787-8 aircraft crash which killed 260 people. Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said that the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau probe into the crash is unbiased.

SC raps 'political' ED; Rejects MUDA plea against CM's wife

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

The Supreme Court on Monday questioned the Enforcement Directorate's conduct in politically sensitive cases as it upheld the Karnataka High Court's decision to quash the case against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife in the MUDA case.

Cautioning against the agency being used as a tool in political battles Chief Justice BR Gavai said, "Let political battles be fought before the electorate. Why are you being used".

The bench comprising Chief Justice Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran was hearing the ED's appeal challenging a Karnataka High Court order that quashed proceedings in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case involving BM Parvati, wife of the Karnataka Chief Minister.

"(Additional Solicitor General SV Raju who was appearing for the ED), please don't compel us to open our mouths. Otherwise, we will be forced to make some harsh comments about the ED. Unfortunately, I have some experience in Maharashtra. Don't perpetuate this violence across the country. Let political battles be fought before the electorate. Why are you being used," the CJI said. —*PTI*

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Dhankhar resigns as Vice President for health reasons

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned as Vice President on Monday, citing medical reasons. He has sent his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu and said he was stepping down with immediate effect.

"To prioritise health care and abide by medical advice, I hereby resign as Vice President of India, effective immediately, in accordance with Article 67(a) of the Constitution," Dhankhar said in his letter to the President.

"As I leave this esteemed office, I am filled with pride in Bharat's global rise and phenomenal achievements and hold unwavering confidence in her brilliant future," he added.

According to the Vice President's office website, the Vice-President is elected by an electoral college consisting of members of both Houses of Parliament, in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote and the voting in such election is by secret ballot.

Since the Dhankhar is the Chairman of Rajya Sabha, the Deputy Chairman will take over until the President appoints a new Chairman.

Dhankhar, 74, assumed office as the Vice President in August 2022. —*Agencies*

SC: ED 'crossing all limits' summoning lawyers

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Enforcement Directorate is "crossing all limits", the Supreme Court said on Monday as it expressed serious concern over the agency summoning advocates for offering legal advice or representing clients during investigations. It also called for guidelines on the matter. The court heard a suo motu case to address the implications of such actions on the independence of the legal profession. This comes in the wake of the ED summoning senior lawyers Arvind Datar and Pratap Venugopal. "They are crossing all limits," the court said. The court highlighted how the ED had been filing appeals even against well-reasoned orders only for the sake of filing them. The bench directed parties, including the SCBA to file comprehensive notes on the issue and. ED said it directed its officers not to issue summons to any advocate. —*PTI*

Air India plane veers off runway at Mumbai airport

MUMBAI, 21 JULY

An Air India aircraft from Kochi veered off the runway while landing in heavy rain at the city airport, following which operations in one of the runways were temporarily suspended on Monday morning. All passengers and crew are safe. Three tyres of the plane suffered a burst besides damage to the engine due to the incident. The flight operating from Kochi to Mumbai, experienced heavy rain during landing, resulting in a runway excursion after touchdown. Operations on one of the airport's runways were initially shut and then restarted. Mumbai airport said the emergency response teams of the airport were immediately activated to manage the runway excursion. —*PTI*

Firemen at the site of the tragedy in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Monday. The Chinese-made jet crashed into Milestone School and College **PHOTO: PTI**

20 KILLED, 171 INJURED AS B'DESH AIR FORCE JET CRASHES INTO SCHOOL

DHAKA, 21 JULY

A Bangladesh Air Force training fighter jet crashed into a school building in Dhaka shortly after takeoff on Monday, killing at least 20 people, mostly children, and injuring 171, in one of the deadliest aviation accidents in the country's recent history. At least 50 others were critically injured, at the time of publishing.

The F-7 BGI aircraft, a training fighter jet manufactured in China, crashed into the two-storey building of Milestone School and College at Diabari in Dhaka's Uttara area.

The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Mohammad Towkir Islam, was killed in the crash.

The pilot attempted to steer the aircraft away from densely populated areas. However, the aircraft tragically crashed into the two-storey school, said the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) - the media wing of the military – in a statement.

The aircraft crashed due to a mechanical fault after taking off from the Bangladesh Air Force Base AK Khandaker in Kurmitola at 1.06pm as part of a regular training. —*PTI*

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A MARXIST PIONEER

Former Kerala chief minister VS Achuthanandan dies at 101

T'PURAM, 21 JULY

Former Kerala chief minister and veteran CPI(M) leader VS Achuthanandan, one of India's most respected Communist figures and a key presence in Kerala's political history, died on Monday at the age of 101, CPI(M) state Secretary MV Govindan said.

The veteran leader passed away at 3.20pm while undergoing treatment in the critical care unit of Pattom SUT Hospital, according to an official bulletin issued by the hospital.

Achuthanandan had been receiving treatment since 23 June, following a cardiac arrest.

A founding member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Achuthanandan was a lifelong champion of workers' rights, land reforms, and social justice. He served as Kerala's chief minister from 2006 to 2011 and was elected to the state assembly seven times, serving three terms as leader of the opposition.

Govindan said Achuthanandan's body would be shifted to the AKG Study and Research Centre in Thiruvananthapuram so party workers and the public could pay their respects. At night, the mortal remains will be taken to his house here. On Tuesday morning, the body will be kept at the Durbar Hall for the public to pay homage.

Former Kerala chief minister and veteran Communist leader VS Achuthanandan **PHOTO: PTI**

Afterwards, the body will be transported to his hometown, Alappuzha, on Tuesday afternoon. After a stop at the party's district headquarters in Alappuzha, Achuthanandan's cremation will take place at the public crematorium in Wednesday noon.

Born in Punnapra, Achuthanandan became known for his integrity, sharp speeches in colloquial Malayalam, and firm stance against corruption, land grabs, and misuse of power. —*PTI*

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Court issues gag order on media in D'sthala burial case

BENGALURU, 21 JULY

A Bengaluru court has issued a significant injunction preventing media houses and YouTube channels from disseminating any defamatory content concerning Harshendra Kumar D, brother of Dharmasthala Dharmadhikari Veerendra Heggade, amid allegations from a sanitation worker claiming he buried bodies at the temple.

Harshendra filed a defamation suit that cited over 8,800 links to various media reports, which caused irreparable harm to his reputation and that of the institutions associated with the temple. The court expressed concerns over the undue impact such allegations on Harshendra, his family and employees and students of the temple's educational institutions.

He sought a John Doe order to encompass named and unnamed parties generating similar defamatory content. The matter will be heard on 5 August. —*Agencies*

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DyCM won't have public visits for 3 days

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar will not be available for any public meetings for three days starting 22 July. "Due to other engagements, I would not be able to meet the public, party workers or the party leaders for the next three days. I regret any inconvenience caused due to this," the press statement said.

—Salar News

Smoke erupts from Hassan-Solapur train coach

KALABURAGI, 21 JULY

Passengers on the Hassan-Solapur Superfast Express were thrown into panic early on Monday morning when dense smoke began pouring from one of the coaches. The incident occurred at approximately 5.45am near Marathur village in Kalaburagi district, as train number 11312 was making its way to Solapur, according to railway sources. Railway officials reported that the smoke originated from the brake binding of the fourth coach, attributed to a technical fault. Alert staff at Marathur quickly identified the problem and signalled for the train to stop. As the train came to a halt, anxious passengers rushed to evacuate, grabbing their luggage amid fears of a fire. Fortunately, railway personnel acted swiftly to manage the situation, preventing any casualties or damage. *—PTI*

Father and son drown in Belagavi

BELAGAVI, 21 JULY

A father and his son drowned in an agriculture pond in Malagali village in Belagavi district. The deceased were identified as 40-year-old Basavaraj Nilappa Kengeri and his 14-year-old son, Dhareppa. Basavaraj along with his son and 16-year-old, Bhagappa Sannakki had working in the agriculture field when the incident occurred. When Basavaraj had gone to the pond to fetch water, he accidentally slipped and fell into the water. Seeing this, both Dhareppa and Bhagappa jumped into the pond to save their father. In the attempt Dhareppa also drowned, while his sister was rescued by the farmers working on the nearby fields. The bodies were later fished out of the pond. *—Salar News*

Farmer found murdered in Belagavi

BELAGAVI, 21 JULY

A 55-year-old farmer, Shashikanth Krishna Honakambale, was found of the district was found brutally murdered in a farm in Shedabal village in Kagwad taluk on Monday morning. He was attacked badly with iron weapons, with marks of severe injuries on his body. He is believed to have been working at late Dakshin Bharat Jain president Raosaheb Patil's farm when he was attacked, when his body was found. One of his two sons, Rahul, who was helping his father work in the fields,, alleged that there was a personal rivalry behind the murder. Honakambale's other son serves in the Indian Defence Forces. The Kagwad and Athani police are investigating the case. *—Salar News*

'SC's MUDA verdict slap on Centre's vendetta politics'

CM says the BJP must apologise for its false campaign

BENGALURU, 21 JULY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said the Supreme Court's dismissal of the ED's appeal to investigate his wife Parvathi BM, in connection with the MUDA site allotment case, is a "slap on the face" of the Central government's "vendetta politics".

Hailing the SC judgment, the CM said it should serve as a wake-up call for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah regarding the alleged misuse of Central agencies for "political gain".

"The Supreme Court's historic verdict.... is a resounding slap on the face of the Central Government's vendetta politics," Siddaramaiah said on X. "This verdict has not only exposed the malice behind the case but has also unequivocally cleared our names of all the baseless allegations".

The CM charged that the BJP and its allies, which were unable to defeat him politically, "stooped to misusing Constitutional agencies like the CBI and ED to fabricate baseless cases".

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah *PHOTO: PTI*

He termed the case against him as a "disgraceful and cowardly act".

"The mental agony we have been subjected to will forever remain a painful chapter in our lives. The words spoken by Honourable Chief Justice BR Gavai reflect the voice of my conscience and of every Constitution-believing Indian," he said.

"Even now, after this eye-opening judgment, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah must wake up and stop weaponising constitutional agencies for political gain. It is time they restore the autonomy of these institutions and cleanse themselves of the sins of political misuse," he remarked. The CM also demanded an apology from the BJP and its ally JD(S) leaders in State, stating that they had relentlessly hurled fabricated allegations at him and his family. "If they have even an ounce of dignity or shame left, they must come forward and publicly apologise," Siddaramaiah said. Similarly, AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala accused the BJP of "manufacturing" false allegations against Siddaramaiah. *—PTI*

- Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said the Supreme Court's dismissal of the ED's appeal to investigate his wife Parvathi BM, in connection with the MUDA site allotment case, is a "slap on the face" of the Central government's "vendetta politics".

FAKE NEWS CASE

SC grants relief to Tejasvi Surya in criminal case

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed the State government's plea against a high court order quashing the criminal case against BJP MP Tejasvi Surya.

"What is this? Don't politicise the matter. Fight your battles before the electorate," a bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and K Vinod Chandran told the State.

Surya was alleged to have disseminated fake news on a farmer's suicide in Haveri district.

Surya on 7 November, 2024, had shared a post in which he cited a report from Kannada news portals claiming that a "farmer had died by suicide after discovering that his land had been taken over by the Waqf Board.

The post was deleted after it was declared fake. The bench dismissed the appeal of the State government and cautioned its against politicisation of legal proceedings.

"The Karnataka government filed an FIR against me—at the behest of a minister—accusing me of spreading fake news. The High Court quashed it with a detailed order. But their addiction to vendetta politics made them approach the Supreme Court. Today, not only did the SC dismiss their plea, it imposed costs and cautioned them against politicising institutions," he posted on X.

Surya alleged Congress has long run a "calculated misinformation" campaign against him, even "misusing the police and judiciary." *—PTI*

SDPI members demand the State government to let a High Court judge lead the SIT in probing the alleged rape and murders in Dharmasthala, during a protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Heavy rains predicted in coastal Karnataka, light showers in B'luru

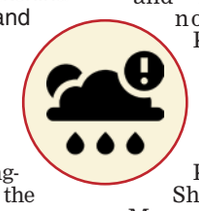
BENGALURU, 21 JULY

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a warning for heavy to very heavy rainfall across parts of Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, and Uttara Kannada districts over the next 24 hours.

On Sunday, Hangaloru in Udupi district recorded the highest rainfall at 92mm, while Gadag district followed closely with 77.1mm, marking it the third highest rainfall tally for July to date. Notably, Gadag witnessed 89.7mm in 2005 and 87.1mm in 2022, with the all-time record standing at 136.4mm on 29 September, 1960.

In Bengaluru, the forecast indicates rainfall ranging from 4 to 10mm for the Greater Bengaluru area on Monday, after the city received 6.5mm of rain on Sunday. Renjala (73.5mm) and Hakladi (70mm) are among other locations in Udupi district that experienced significant rainfall over the weekend.

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a warning for heavy to very heavy rainfall across parts of Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, and Uttara Kannada districts over the next 24 hours.



The IMD has also predicted heavy rains on Monday for Bidar, Kalburgi, Raichur, and Yadgir districts in north interior Karnataka. Meanwhile, regions in south interior Karnataka, including parts of Chikkamagaluru, Kodagu, Hassan, Shivamogga, Mandya, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Ballari, Chikkaballapura, Chitradurga, Davanagere, Kolar, and Vijayanagara, are expected to see heavy rainfall as well. *—PTI*

Dharmasthala mass burial case: Spokesperson welcomes probe

DHARMASTHALA/ BENGALURU, 21 JULY

Dharmasthala spokesperson, K Parshwanath Jain, welcomed the decision of the State government to constitute a special investigation team (SIT) to probe into the alleged mass burial of human bodies in the region.

A case was at the Dharmasthala Police Station, which claimed "several dead bodies were buried" in the region, sparking widespread debate. Jain expressed hope and demanded the SIT to bring out the truth of the matter. The development follows a letter from the Karnataka State Women's Commission requesting that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to form an SIT to investigate the matter. Welcoming the probe, Opposition Leader R Ashoka said that spreading misinformation about the Shri Manjunatha Swamy temple was wrong.

Meanwhile the former chief minister BS Yediyurappa, stated that Dharmasthala has done nothing wrong.

COURT CLAMPDOWN

A Bengaluru court has issued a significant injunction preventing media houses and YouTube channels from disseminating any defamatory content concerning Harshendra Kumar D, brother of Dharmasthala Dharmadhikari Veerendra Heggade, amid allegations from a sanitation worker claiming he buried bodies at the temple.

Harshendra filed a defamation suit claimed that these allegations caused irreparable harm to his reputation and that of the institutions associated with the temple.

The petition detailed over 8,800 links to various media reports, including 4,140 YouTube videos and multiple defamatory social media posts.

– Salar News with Agencies

CUBBON PARK TOUR SOON

Horticulture Department workers clean the lawn at Cubbon Park on Monday ahead of a 90-minute guided tour inaugural event, which is scheduled to start from 27 July in Bengaluru. Bengalureans can go for a guided walk through Cubbon Park every weekend *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

1 dead, 21 injured after bus falls into Karwar stream

KARWAR, 21 JULY

A tragic accident involving a private bus in the State on Monday left one person dead and 21 others injured. The deceased, Vinayak Shinde from Hubballi, was travelling in a bus that fell into a river after crashing into a bridge near Agasur village in Uttara Kannada district around 3am.

Preliminary investigations indicate that the driver was engaged in reckless driving, losing control of the vehicle while attempting to avoid potholes. The bus overturned and fell into the river, prompting rescue efforts by locals and police teams.

While one male passenger tragically lost his life, the remaining 18 passengers sustained minor injuries and were promptly taken to a nearby hospital. Authorities used a crane to recover the bus, and further probe into the incident are ongoing. *—Salar News*

3 robbers arrested, gold worth Rs 2.1 cr recovered

PHOTO: FREEPIK

KALABURAGI, 21 JULY

The police have arrested three people in connection with the robbery at a jewellery shop in the Saraf Bazaar area in Kalaburagi.

Kalaburagi city police commissioner Sharanappa SD made the announcement while interacting with the media here on Monday.

The police recovered gold ornaments worth Rs 2.1 crore, 2.865 kilograms of gold and Rs 4.80 lakh in cash from their possession.

The accused have been identified as Ayodhya Prasad Chauhan, 48; Farooq Ahmad Malik, 40, a gold trader and Sohel Sheikh alias Badshah, 30, a tailor. While Chauhan and Malik hailed from West Bengal, Sheikh was a resident of Mumbai in Maharashtra.

The robbery took place at the Malik Jewellers in Kalaburagi on 11 July.

The police formed five teams and launched a manhunt to nab the culprits. These teams conducted operations in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Telangana.

The police succeeded in apprehending the robbers. The trio were reportedly involved in multiple robbery cases. The team led by Chowk police inspector Raghavendra, Brahmapur inspector Somaling, Shivananad Walikar and Bande Nawaz had travelled to West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. *—Salar News*

BANK FRAUD CASE

CBI arrests scammer from City after 6-yr chase

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

The CBI has arrested a woman named Nasreen Taj, a proclaimed offender in an alleged bank fraud case, who vanished like a phantom into the sprawling Cityscape for nearly six years under an assumed identity, officials said on Monday.

Bringing a dramatic close to the pursuit, the CBI arrested Nasreen from Bengaluru, who was living there under the name of Salma after severing contact with her spouse, family members, and social network, frequently changing residences, they said. "She misled the residents as well as her employer about her real identity and maintained minimal interaction with locals, further hindering the efforts to trace her," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

After a year-long investigation, the CBI submitted its chargesheet on 12 October, 2010, accusing Nasreen of acting in collusion with her husband, Asadullah Khan, who was part of a conspiracy involving eight other accused to cheat Syndicate Bank of Rs 12.63 crore.

Nasreen, despite having no independent income, fraudulently availed of a temporary overdraft (TOD) facility of up to Rs 1.20 crore, in addition to Rs 55 lakh farm loans, from Syndicate Bank.

The CBI alleged that the farm loans were illicitly diverted by her towards the repayment of the TOD, instead of utilising them for agricultural development, as mandated under the terms of the sanction.

While the other co-accused were tried, convicted, and acquitted in the case, the trial against the absconding accused remained pending.

Digital footprint helped cops nab her. *—PTI*

NIMHANS to start yoga-based research centre

BENGALURU, 21 JULY

The City-based NIMHANS and the Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, under the Ministry of AYUSH, on Monday signed an MoU to establish a collaborative research centre for mind-body interventions through yoga.

The five-year partnership aims to bridge traditional Indian healing systems with modern medical science, focusing on evidence-based research in yoga, naturopathy, and their integration into mainstream healthcare, an official release said.

Dr Hemant Bhargav, Associate Professor at the department of integrative medicine, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, will serve as the principal investigator for the collaborative centre.

The research team will be supported by collaborators from NIMHANS, as well as from the CCRYN.

This will involve joint research projects examining the efficacy of mind-body interventions for conditions including mental health disorders, metabolic disorders, and neurological conditions.*—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

'Not worried about China's dam on Brahmaputra'

GUWAHATI, 21 JULY

Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma sought to reassure the public over China's recent decision to construct the world's largest dam on the Brahmaputra River. Speaking to reporters, Sarma acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding the dam's potential impact, while stating that he does not perceive any immediate threat. Noting that varying theories exist regarding its implications, the CM highlighted that Brahmaputra is not reliant on a single water source and receives significant contributions from rainfall and other local inflows. When questioned about downstream effects on Assam, Sarma expressed confidence that the Indian government is engaged in discussions with China concerning this crucial issue. *—PTI*

Move Delhi HC: SC on Jaggi's plea on Nakkheeran

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

The Supreme Court on Monday asked Jaggi Vasudev's Isha Foundation to move Delhi High Court with its plea to restrain a Tamil media outlet from publishing alleged defamatory content against it. SC also allowed the Tamil media outlet, Nakkheeran Publications, to withdraw its transfer petition and asked it to move HC on the maintainability of Isha Foundation's defamation suit against it. The bench said since the transfer petition was withdrawn, the intervention application filed by Foundation's could also go before the HC. *—PTI*

Congress leader shot dead in T'gana, five held

HYDERABAD, 21 JULY

Five persons were arrested on Monday in connection with the murder of a 29-year-old Congress leader who was shot dead in Telangana's Medak district, police said. M Anil, Medak district Congress SC cell Secretary, was gunned down on the night of 14 July while travelling in a car in Kulcharam mandal. Police said Anil and three of the accused were previously acquainted but developed enmity over land and financial disputes. The accused allegedly conspired with two others to eliminate him. As per the plan, the accused followed Anil in two cars. One of the vehicles overtook and blocked his path. A man stepped out and fired four rounds at him. Though Anil was rushed to a hospital, doctors declared him dead *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Kerala CM rejects corruption claims on Digital varsity

T-PURAM, 21 JULY

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan firmly refuted allegations of corruption at the state-run Digital University, labelling accusations from Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan as "factually incorrect" and "misleading." In a letter dated 12 July, Satheesan called for a vigilance probe into alleged financial fraud and misuse of power, claiming that faculty members were using shell companies to divert university funds. Vijayan responded, asserting that a statutory audit had been conducted up to the 2023–24 financial year and that the university had sought further audits from the Comptroller and Auditor General. *—PTI*

Trump's ceasefire claims humiliating: Cong

US President claimed 24 times that he had brokered the ceasefire deal between India & Pakistan

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday termed US President Donald Trump's repeated claims that he mediated between India and Pakistan to bring about a ceasefire during Operation Sindoor as "humiliating" for the country, and asked the government for a clarification on the issue.

Kharge, and other Congress party members also demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi give answers to the issues raised by them regarding the Pahalgam terror attack and Trump's claims on ceasefire during Operation Sindoor.

"The government should also clarify its stand on the statement of US President Donald Trump, because he has claimed not once but 24 times that he got the ceasefire done. This is humiliating for the country," he said.

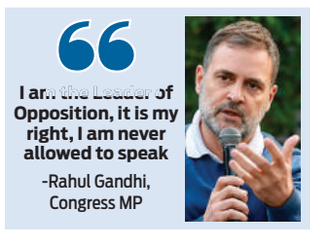
Recalling that the Pahalgam terror attack that took place on 22 April, Kharge lamented that the terrorists who carried the attack have neither been caught nor killed till date.

Responding to Kharge's demands, Leader of the House and Union Minister JP Nadda asserted that the government was ready to discuss all issues related to Operation Sindoor.

Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar also assured agitating Opposition MPs that he will ensure a full-fledged discussion on the issue for as much time as members want.

Dhankhar said he will discuss the issue with leaders of various parties. *—PTI*

Congress President and LoP in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge speaks in the House during the first day of the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi PHOTO: PTI



AI crash probe by AAIB unbiased: Min

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

In response to an initial probe report released by the AAIB, the Union Minister stressed the importance of respecting the investigative process. We want to stand by the truth," Naidu stated, emphasising that definitive answers would arise only after the final report is published.

mid speculation regarding the role of the pilots in the crash, Naidu highlighted that the AAIB's preliminary findings solely reflect facts gleaned from the cockpit voice and flight data recorders. He urged restraint against spreading premature narratives surrounding the investigation.

Naidu also remarked on the successful decoding of the flight's black boxes within India, a first for the country. *—PTI*

Panel seeks relief for small taxpayers

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

A Parliamentary panel, chaired by BJP MP Baijayant Panda, has recommended key amendments to the draft Income Tax Bill, 2025, including allowing individuals to claim TDS refunds even if they miss the filing deadline.

The panel also urged exemptions for anonymous donations made to religious-cum-charitable trusts.

The report flagged Clause 337, which proposes a flat 30 per cent tax on anonymous donations to registered non-profits, except those solely religious.

This, it said, unfairly penalises hybrid religious-charitable trusts, which often receive donations through traditional means where donor identity is unknown. *—PTI*

Congress legislators stage a protest during the first day of the Monsoon session of Bihar Assembly, in Patna, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

Anti-SIR protests rock Bihar Assembly

PATNA, 21 JULY

Protests against Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar rocked the State Assembly on the inaugural day of the monsoon session on Monday.

Members of the CPI(ML) Liberation, a constituent of the INDIA bloc, reached the premises wearing black kurtas as a mark of protest against SIR.

"The Election Commission has ordered the exercise to wrongfully delete the names of a large number of voters, hoping that this would help the ruling NDA...We shall be fighting it out from the House to the streets," said CPI(ML)'sMehboob Alam.

As proceedings of the House began, many Opposition members rose in their seats, raising slogans against SIR and also seeking a response from Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who was present in the Assembly, on the recent spurt in violent crimes.

AIMIM MLA Akhtarul Iman, whose party has expressed the desire to join INDIA bloc in Bihar, stormed into the well, raising slogans against the SIR, only to be admonished by Speaker Nand Kishore Yadav, who asked him to return to his seat.

Proceedings of the day were subsequently adjourned after obituary references. *—PTI*

Bihar first state to have less than 1.2k voters per station

New Delhi, 21 JULY

Bihar has become the first state in the country to have less than 1,200 electors across polling stations, the Election Commission said on Monday. 12,817 new polling stations have been created, taking the total number of stations in Bihar to 90,712 from 77,895. *—PTI*

'WB BJP spreading linguistic terrorism'

KOLKATA, 21 JULY

Sharpening her 'Bengali asmita' (pride) pitch ahead of the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday accused the BJP of waging "linguistic terrorism" against Bengalis and vowed to resist any attempt to undermine their identity.

Addressing a massive crowd at the Trinamool Congress's annual Martyrs' Day rally in Kolkata, Banerjee announced a state-wide language movement from 27 July to protest what she called the BJP's continuous attacks on the Bengali language and culture.

She alleged that Bengali speakers were being unfairly targeted, particularly in BJP-ruled states like Assam, where they were being harassed and placed in detention camps.

"If this linguistic profiling doesn't stop, the resistance will march to Delhi," she warned.

TMC supremo & Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with Rajbanshi community member Uttam Kumar Brajabashi during the party's Martyrs' Day rally, in Kolkata, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

The TMC supremo also recalled the 2019 vandalism of the Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar statue and accused the BJP of attempting to delete Bengali names from voter rolls.

She further criticised the Election Commission for allegedly acting at the behest of the saffron party.

Abhishek: BJP Will Be 'Detained' in 2026

TMC national General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee echoed her sentiments, and warned that after the 2026 elections, BJP would be "sent to detention camps" electorally for its divisive agenda. *—PTI*

Ban Raj Thackeray from Guj: Cong, AAP over remarks on Sardar Patel

AHMEDABAD, 21 JULY

The Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and Patidar leaders in Gujarat have united in criticism of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray following his controversial remarks about Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and former Prime Minister Morarji Desai.

They are demanding a ban on Thackeray's entry into Gujarat and the filing of a First Information Report (FIR) against him.

During a rally in Thane, Thackeray suggested that a violent incident against migrants from Bihar in Gujarat was overlooked, while a minor event in Maharashtra drew national attention. He also made remarks regarding Morarji Desai and Sardar Patel's alleged opposition to Marathi interests post-independence.

Amit Chavda, the newly appointed president of the Gujarat Congress, emphasized that insulting "Sardar Saheb" is intolerable. AAP's state president Isudan Gadhvi echoed this sentiment, asserting that Gujaratis will not tolerate such disrespect towards a national leader.

Patidar leader Manoj Panara has lodged a petition urging police to pursue a sedition case against Thackeray. *—PTI*

'Mobile game' row: Ajit asks NCP's Chavan to resign

MUMBAI, 21 JULY

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar asked NCP Youth Wing chief Suraj Chavan to resign on Monday, after he and his supporters allegedly beat up Chhava Sanghatna activists. The violent incident occurred during a protest against Agriculture Minister Manikrao Kokate, after a video of him playing a mobile game at the Assembly went viral. Pawar condemned the behaviour, stating that it goes against the party's values. *—PTI*

AIADMK leader and ex-MP Anwar Raja joins DMK

CHENNAI, 21 JULY

Anwar Raja, the AIADMK's organising secretary and former member of parliament, has defected to the DMK in a significant political shift. Present at the announcement was Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin. Raja, a well-known figure from Ramanathapuram, expressed his dissatisfaction with AIADMK leader Edappadi K Palaniswami, particularly criticizing the party's alliance with the BJP.

Raja claimed that the BJP's agenda aimed to undermine the AIADMK before targeting the DMK. He expressed concerns over Hindi imposition and the threat to state autonomy under the current central government. Following his departure, AIADMK expelled Raja, claiming that his exit would not harm the party.

He asserted that the BJP's strategy was to dismantle Dravidian parties rather than contest elections genuinely, citing the situation in West Bengal as evidence. *—PTI*

Anwar Raja PHOTO: PTI

Baghel's son misused Rs 16.7 cr: ED

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Chaitanya Baghel, the son of former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel who has been arrested in the alleged liquor scam, used Rs 16.7 crore funds to fund his business, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) claimed.

He was arrested for allegedly handling over Rs 1,000 crore in "proceeds of crime" linked to a liquor scam in the state on 18 July.

The agency claims that Chaitanya used Rs 16.7 crore from the alleged scam to fund his real estate projects, including the Vitthalpuram Project, where he allegedly colluded with a local businessman to facilitate illicit transactions.

Modi-Shah targeting my son is good fortune: Baghel

Bhupesh Baghel accused the ruling NDA government in the Centre of misusing central probe agencies, asserting that the timing of his son's arrest was intended to distract people from the ongoing issues regarding illegal tree felling in the state.

He said that it is his son's "good fortune" that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah are against him. *—PTI*

NATION OR PARTY FIRST?

Won't collaborate with Tharoor: Kerala Cong

Congress leader K Muraleedharan PHOTO: PTI

T-PURAM, 21 JULY

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor is encountering criticism from within his own party after advocating a "nation first" approach in the context of Operation Sindoor.

Senior Congress leader K Muraleedharan announced that the party is unwilling to collaborate with Tharoor in Kerala, citing his repeated criticism of Congress, including notable figures like Indira Gandhi.

Speaking to ANI, Muraleedharan remarked, "The final authority will be the Congress high command, which will determine Tharoor's fate within the party. We are dissatisfied with his performance. He no longer engages with his parliamentary constituency and has consistently opposed Rahul Gandhi's statements."

He asserted that the party would not support Tharoor in the forthcoming local body elections.

Tharoor's recent remarks, made during an event in Kochi, emphasised the necessity of coalition politics for national security. He highlighted that the ultimate goal of any political party should be to improve India and urged political unity during times of national peril.

"When the nation is imperiled, we must put our differences aside," he stated, quoting former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru: "Who lives if India dies?"

Revolutionary Socialist Party MP NK Premachandran, responding to Tharoor's stance, challenged the notion that party interests could diverge from national interests, insisting all parties are inherently committed to the betterment of the nation. "None of the parties act against the nation's interest," he affirmed. *—ANI*

Andhra liquor scam: TIL paid Rs 218 cr kickbacks

AMARAVATI, 21 JULY

- A Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case filed a chargesheet in a Vijayawada court on Saturday. TIL is not named as an accused in it.

Andhra Pradesh Police, investigating an alleged Rs 3,500 crore liquor scam during the previous YSRCP regime, has found that Tilaknagar Industries Ltd (TIL), a prominent liquor manufacturer, allegedly paid Rs 218 crore in kickbacks to secure supply orders from the state-run Andhra Pradesh State Beverages Corporation Ltd (APSBCL).

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case filed a chargesheet in a Vijayawada court on Saturday. The court is yet to take cognisance. Notably, TIL has not been named as an accused.

According to officials, TIL earned approximately Rs 1,472 crore in revenue from APSBCL. A portion of this was allegedly routed through jewellery merchants to convert legitimate earnings into untraceable gold. These transactions were disguised as GST-compliant expenses, giving the appearance of legality while facilitating money laundering. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

CBSC mandates schools to install CCTV cameras

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has amended its affiliation by-laws to mandate the installation of high-resolution CCTV cameras with real-time audio-visual recording across all areas of school premises—except toilets and washrooms.

CBSE Secretary Himanshu Gupta stated that student safety is a key responsibility of schools, covering protection from external threats, bullying, and other risks.

The revised rule applies to entry and exit points, corridors, classrooms, staircases, libraries, labs, canteens, playgrounds, and other common spaces.

Each camera system must include storage capable of preserving recordings. *—PTI*

Odisha NSUI's president held for 'raping' student

BHUBANESWAR, 21 JULY

Udit Pradhan, Odisha president of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), was arrested for allegedly raping a 19-year-old engineering student in a Bhubaneswar hotel. The incident took place on 18 March but surfaced after the victim filed a complaint, claiming Pradhan spiked her drink and raped her, later threatening her into silence.

NSUI national president Varun Choudhary suspended Pradhan with immediate effect, stressing a zero-tolerance policy on gender-based violence.The Odisha Congress has set up a six-member inquiry panel, led by vice-president Sasmita Behera, to investigate and meet the student.

Supporters of Pradhan protested outside Mancheswar Police Station following his arrest. *—PTI*

Patna Hospital murder: 4 accused brought to Bihar

PATNA, 21 JULY

The four people, who were arrested in Kolkata in connection with the murder of gangster Chandan Mishra inside a private hospital in Patna, were brought here on transit remand. The Bihar Police, in a joint operation with Kolkata Police and Kolkata Special Task Force, arrested Tauseef, the prime accused, his cousin Nishu Khan and their two associates Harsh and Bhim on 19 July. Chandan Mishra, hailing from Bihar's Buxar and was a murder convict on parole, was shot dead by gunmen inside a private hospital in Patna on 17 July. A CCTV footage of the incident showed five armed men entering the hospital ICU and opening fire. *—PTI*

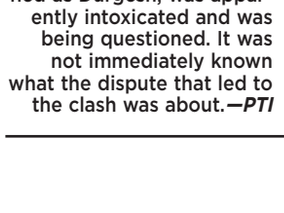


PHOTO: PTI

Pilgrims attacked during Kanwar Yatra in UP; 2 held

BARABANKI, 21 JULY

A group of kanwariyas has been allegedly attacked by some intoxicated men in Uttar Pradesh's Barabanki following a dispute on 20 July. The kanwariyas, after offering water at the Prasanna Nath Mahadev Temple, were walking from Bhagauli Tirth towards the Lodheswar Mahadev temple in Ramnagar. There was an altercation between the kanwariyas and a group of men near a shop. Six men intercepted them near a petrol station and attacked them. Two people have been taken into custody. One of the detained identified as Durgesh, was apparently intoxicated and was being questioned. It was not immediately known what the dispute that led to the clash was about. *—PTI*

7/11 train blasts: HC says it did its duty

SC quashes conviction for utter lack of evidence, no evidentiary value in witness statements

MUMBAI, 21 JULY

The Bombay High Court bench of Justices Anil Kilor and Shyam Chandak, that on Monday acquitted all the 12 accused in the July 2006 serial train blasts in Mumbai, said it did its duty as judges.

The bench quashed the conviction of 12 people by a special court in 2015, noting the prosecution had "utterly failed" to prove the case.

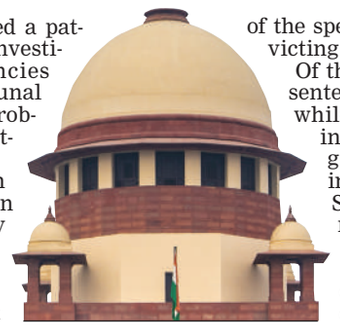
The witness statements and alleged recoveries made from the accused have no evidentiary value, the HC said.

Advocate Yug Chaudhary, appearing for the accused, said the judgment restored faith in humanity and judiciary as the 12 accused have been languishing in jail for 19 years for a crime they had not committed.

Senior advocate S Murlidhar, appearing for the accused, submitted that the accused spent the better parts of their life in jail despite being innocent.

He had alleged a pattern wherein investigating agencies show "communal bias" while probing terror related cases.

The 11 July, 2006 file photo shows a train coach damaged by a bomb blast at Matunga Railway Station in Mumbai. 12 people arrested were acquitted on Monday after spending 19 years in jail *PHOTO: PTI*



- The high court on Monday refused to confirm the September 2015 judgment of the special court convicting the 12 persons. While five of the accused were sentenced to death, the remaining seven were given life imprisonment.

The high court on Monday refused to confirm the September 2015 judgment of the special court convicting the 12 persons.

Of the 12, five were sentenced to death while the remaining seven were given life imprisonment.

Seven blasts ripped through Mumbai local trains at various locations on the western line, killing more than 180 persons and injuring several others on 11 July, 2006.

In 2024, Ehtesham Siddiqui, who was handed the death penalty, filed an application in the HC seeking its intervention, expeditious hearing and disposal of the appeals.

A special bench set up to hear the appeals in 2024, reserved its order. *—PTI*

ACCUSED CONVICTED & ON DEATH ROW

Kamal Ahmed Ansari: Died in 2021 pending hearing of the appeal. He planted the bomb that exploded at Matunga.

Md Faisal Rahman Shaikh: He was one of the main conspirators who assembled bombs and planted one.

Ehtesham Siddiqui: He allegedly carried out a recce of the trains and planting the bomb that went off.

Naveed Hussain Khan Rasheed: He assembled bombs and planted one in a Bandra train.

Asif Khan Bashir Khan: He helped assemble the bombs and planted one that exploded at Borivali.

Tanveer Ahmed Ansari: He attended terror camps in Pakistan and also conducted recce.

Md Shafi: He ran a hawala racket and procured money from Pakistan.

Shaikh Md Ali Alam: He assembled bombs at his house.

Md Sajid Ansari: He procured timers for the bombs and helped assemble them. He also harboured Pakistani nationals.

Muzammil Rahman Shaikh: He conducted recce of the local trains. His brothers -- Faisal and Raahil -- were allegedly the conspirators, but never got caught.

Suhail Mehmood Shaikh: He carried out a recce.

Zameer Rehman Shaikh: He received training in Pakistan.

SC refuses listing of plea on FIR against Yashwant Varma

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to list for urgent hearing a plea seeking the registration of an FIR against the Allahabad High Court's Justice Yashwant Varma in connection with the cash discovery row.

The court was urged by lawyer Mathews Nedumpara to list his third petition on the matter for hearing.

"Do you want it to be dismissed right now?" the CJI asked, adding that it will be listed in due course.

The lawyers said that it was impossible to be dismissed as an FIR had been registered.

Yashwant Varma *PHOTO: PTI*

The Allahabad High Court judge moved SC seeking to invalidate a report by an in-house inquiry panel, which found him guilty of misconduct in the cash discovery row.

Varma has sought quashing of the 8 May 8 by then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, urging Parliament to initiate impeachment against him.

The government plans to move a motion to remove Varma in Parliament's Monsoon session.

The inquiry panel's report stated that Justice Varma and his family members had active control over the store room where a huge cache of half-burnt cash was found, which is serious enough to seek his removal. *—PTI*

Couple killed, schools shut as rains lash HP

SHIMLA, 21 JULY

Heavy rains triggered landslides in Himachal Pradesh, with a newlywed couple tragically losing their lives in Chamba district. The state is grappling with extensive road closures and school shutdowns due to severe weather conditions, highlighting the ongoing challenges posed by the monsoon season.

Mumbai experienced significant waterlogging on Monday following overnight heavy rains, disrupting traffic across the city.

The Andheri subway was closed due to flooding, while motorists faced slow movement on the Eastern and Western Express Highways. Meteorological officials forecasted continued rain with possible thunderstorms.

A devastating landslide struck the old track leading to the Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district, Jammu and Kashmir on Monday morning, resulting in one confirmed death and ten injuries among pilgrims. The landslide, was caused by heavy rainfall in Katra. *—PTI*

IT'S RAINING CATS AND DOGS

Mumbai experienced waterlogging on Monday following overnight heavy rains, disrupting traffic across the city *PHOTO: PTI*

Shreyas Talpade gets immunity from arrest in cheating case

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

The Supreme Court has granted actor Shreyas Talpade protection from arrest in a cheating and breach of trust case linked to the Human Welfare Credit Cooperative Society Ltd. A complaint filed by Vipul Antil claimed that Talpade and actor Alok Nath, as brand ambassadors, misled the public into investing in the society, which operated as a multi-level marketing scheme. *—PTI*

SC continues stay on 'Udaipur Files' release

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

The Centre on Monday informed the Supreme Court that it has suggested six cuts in the movie "Udaipur Files - Kanhaiya Lal Tailor Murder". The court said that the producers would have to comply with the directions of cutting the scenes, unless they wished to challenge the order. The counsel for accused said the interim stay should continue till the SC decided the issue. *—PTI*

Self-immolation: Girl's complaint not validated

BALASORE, 21 JULY

The Odisha Police's Crime Branch is investigating the tragic self-immolation of a 20-year-old college student, who took her life after her complaints of sexual harassment were allegedly not substantiated by her institution's internal enquiry committee.

The Crime Branch's Director General, Vinaytosh Mishra, revealed that discrepancies were found in witness statements connected to the case. While the college authorities did take some action regarding the complaint, Mishra indicates that the internal inquiry failed to validate her claims, which may have contributed to her decision to self-immolate on 12 July.

Congress workers protesting over the death of a college student, who set herself on fire in the college campus in Balasore in Odisha *PHOTO: PTI*

The investigation has since revealed inconsistencies between witness statements and social media posts. Two individuals—Samir Kumar Sahoo, head of the college's Integrated BEd department, and the former principal Dillip Ghose—have been arrested.

- Samir Kumar Sahoo, head of the college's BEd department, and former principal, Dillip Ghose were arrested.

The probe is ongoing, with CCTV footage being examined, and statements from committee members being recorded. In addition to the Crime Branch, a UGC fact-finding team and the Odisha higher education department are conducting separate investigations. *—PTI*

Anti-submarine warfare ships for Navy launched

KOLKATA, 21 JULY

Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd has launched 'Ajay', the eighth and final Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Shallow Water Craft built for the Indian Navy. The launch took place on Monday in Kolkata, with Priya Deshmukh, wife of Vice Admiral Kiran Deshmukh, Chief of Materiel, officiating the ceremony.

Designed and built entirely in India, these warships represent a major step towards a self-reliant defence sector. Purpose-built for coastal and shallow water operations, the 77.6-metre-long vessels feature a 10.5 metre beam and a low draught, allowing them to operate close to shore.

Each ship is equipped with a comprehensive ASW suite, including lightweight torpedoes, anti-submarine rockets, and mines. They are also capable of sub-surface surveillance, mine-laying, and low-intensity maritime operations, as well as conducting joint anti-submarine missions with aircraft.

According to GRSE, these multi-role warships can detect and neutralise enemy submarines and surface vessels, strengthening India's coastal defence capabilities. The successful completion of the eight-ship series marks a significant milestone in India's indigenous warship building efforts. *—PTI/ Agencies*

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HOMEWARD BOUND

Grounded British fighter jet to fly back

A CISF official guarding the UK F-35 B stealth fighter, which was grounded at Thiruvananthapuram airport for over a month *PHOTO: PTI*

T'PURAM, 21 JULY

British Royal Navy F-35B Lightning fighter jet, which made an emergency landing at the international airport here over a month ago and parked here since then, is all set to fly back home on 22 July, sources said.

According to airport sources here, the repair works of the jet, part of the UK's most advanced stealth fleet, were completed.

"It is being brought out of the hangar now. The jet will be brought to our bay, and it will fly back on Tuesday," the source said.

The exact time of its return is yet to be available, he said.

Known to be one of the most advanced fighter aircraft in the world and worth over USD 110 million, the jet has remained grounded at the international airport here since 14 June after it developed a technical snag.

Later, aviation engineers from the UK arrived here to carry out the necessary repairs.

The source said the British jet has been kept at the hangar of Air India all these days.

Besides the landing charge, there was also daily rent and a parking fee for the aircraft at the airport, he said.

"The equipment and crew who came for its maintenance from the UK will go back in another flight," the source added. *—PTI*

Workers at the launch of 'Ajay', an anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft for the Indian Navy in Kolkata *PHOTO: PTI*

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has restarted the government's Shuchi-Nanna Maitri scheme to encourage girls to use menstrual cups; He also started Puneet Hrudaya Jyothi scheme for cardiac healthcare **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

'Puneet Hrudaya Jyothi' has given me most satisfaction as health minister: Dinesh Gundu Rao

Whatever ideology one believes in, hate speeches and inciting people will not be allowed

-DINESH GUNDU RAO, HEALTH MINISTER

SALAR ? UPCLOSE

MOHAMMED YOUSUF

One of the first acts of Dinesh Gundu Rao, after he took charge as health and family welfare minister in 2023, was to review the conditions of state-run dialysis centres and the process in which tenders were issued. He felt the rates were high and called for fresh tenders. Son of Karnataka's former chief minister R Gundu Rao, he has been representing Gandhinagar constituency in Bengaluru since 1999. In an interview with Salar News, Rao takes pride that Karnataka is the first state to have a proper policy on the 'Right To Die With Dignity'.

What prompted you to implement the Supreme Court's 2018 verdict on the 'Right To Die With Dignity'. How different is Karnataka's model from Kerala?

This was an issue that was brought to our notice by some organisations. When we looked at it, we realised its importance. The Supreme Court had given guidelines, but they had not been implemented across the country. Kerala, to some extent, had done something such as the process of the legal form of euthanasia. We came out with a proper policy after discussing with the various stakeholders and Karnataka was the first in the country to come out with the Advanced Medical Directive, which when a person is healthy, he can make a medical or living will on what actions should be taken if he is no longer to take decisions because of illness or incapacity. The second aspect is when someone is terminally ill, a process has been laid out, where the family and the medical experts can make a decision on how to end the person's life.

While the Karnataka government's decision on 'Right To Die With Dignity' and the Advance Medical Directive has been hailed, it has also raised ethical and legal challenges as the euthanasia issue remains controversial with concerns about the potential for misuse or undue influence on vulnerable patients?

No, it's a watertight process. There's a committee in the hospital which has to certify and another panel of medical experts who will have to approve. It cannot just be that someone can just simply takes a decision. It's a multiple-layered process which ensures that the decision is taken after everybody is on board and is certified. There's no scope for manipulation.

Your department took the initiative of banning use of artificial colours in cotton candy, gobi manchurian and kebab, and use of plastic sheets in steaming idlis. Now, it has sought the Centre's intervention in setting national guidelines for tattooing. Did you face any hurdles?

We didn't face any problem. We brought awareness among people that these preparations are harmful. They were using plastic sheets to steam idlis. Our food safety department, I think after a long time, seemed to be effective in its functioning. Regarding tattoos, the department found that 22 types of metals were being used in the tattooing ink and we sought the Centre's intervention for framing guidelines to ban it. People went to court, but the judiciary stood by us. We have also amended the Tobacco Prohibition Act. Some people tried to put pressure, but we were clear in our stand. Most of the opposition was behind the curtains. We did not oblige anyone, and they also attempted to curb it through the legal process, but we won the case.

You have advocated mandating electric vehicles for public transport in Bengaluru citing air pollution, as conventional fuel was causing air pollution leading to health issues. Is there any data with the health department on Bengaluru's Air Quality Index?

Yes. That's basically to promote clean energy. We requested the transport department to take steps on these lines as we cannot issue orders and 60 per cent of the pollution is because of conventional vehicles. The internal combustion engines of all the petrol and diesel vehicles are one of the main causes for pollution and Bengaluru should not become like New Delhi.

The Health Minister has banned harmful additives in food, and pushed for tattoo ink regulations

How do you assess the performance of hospitals that come under your department? What are your plans to improve them?

Ours is a public health system and we have hospitals at the district and taluk levels, community and primary health centres. It's a vast network and there are problems. Karnataka, when compared to hospitals in the country, is much better, but states such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala are better than us. We are working on various aspects of how to improve services, availability of drugs and ensure that doctors are present.

How important is Artificial Intelligence and technology in the health field?

Technology and data management are important. We are starting health management information system. It is under a trial process in four districts right now. In a couple of months, we are finalising the process to have data of patients so that they do not have to carry their medical records such as X-rays, which can be accessed online. We are using artificial intelligence in diagnosis.

As minister in charge of Dakshina Kannada district, you accused the fringe elements of exploiting incidents of violence for political gain. Who is gaining from these killings?

There are people on all sides, all sections and organisations who indulge in this kind of activity. There are extreme parties like the BJP or the Socialist Democratic Party of India (SDPI) and under them, fringe organisations such as Bajrang Dal are there. They are the ones who cause all the problems. Whatever ideology one believes in, hate speeches and inciting people will not be allowed.

How is the State government's Shuchi-Nanna Maitri (menstrual cup programme) doing?

This programme was there earlier too, but had been discontinued in the last four or five years. We have revived it. The response has been good and we want girls to start using menstrual cups as it has less impact on the environment, is hygienic and also practical. We have started in two districts this year and plan to expand it.

You started counselling to ensure transparency in transfers, how is it working?

Counselling was started to ensure postings are done based on the candidates' criteria and not due to influence. For the first time, 5,000 plus transfers were done through counselling. The transfers through counselling are choice-based.

Your tenure as KPCC President from 2018 to 2020 was not an easy one. There was a change of government and you also resigned in December 2019 after the party lost in the Assembly bypolls. How difficult was it?

It was a difficult period as the JD(S)-Congress government fell due to defections and in the by-elections held later to seats vacated by the defectors, my party lost. I took moral responsibility for the poor performance in the bypolls and resigned.

You have a legacy of being a former chief minister's son, do you plan to groom anyone from your family as your political heir?

No such plans for the present. But I cannot say what will happen in the future. Presently, there is nobody in the family who seems to be interested in joining politics.

Which project has given you satisfaction as Health Minister?

I don't know if we've done many programmes. I think anything that we do, it's with passion. There's one project that worked very well - Puneet Hrudaya Jyothi scheme, which has saved over 200 lives from cardiac arrest. Under the scheme free injections and medicines are being given. This has given me a lot of happiness. —*Salar News*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Comrade VS who rose from the working class to Kerala's leader

20 OCTOBER, 1923 - 21 JULY, 2025

VS Achuthanandan, the founding figure in the Communist Party of India (Marxist) **PHOTO: PTI**

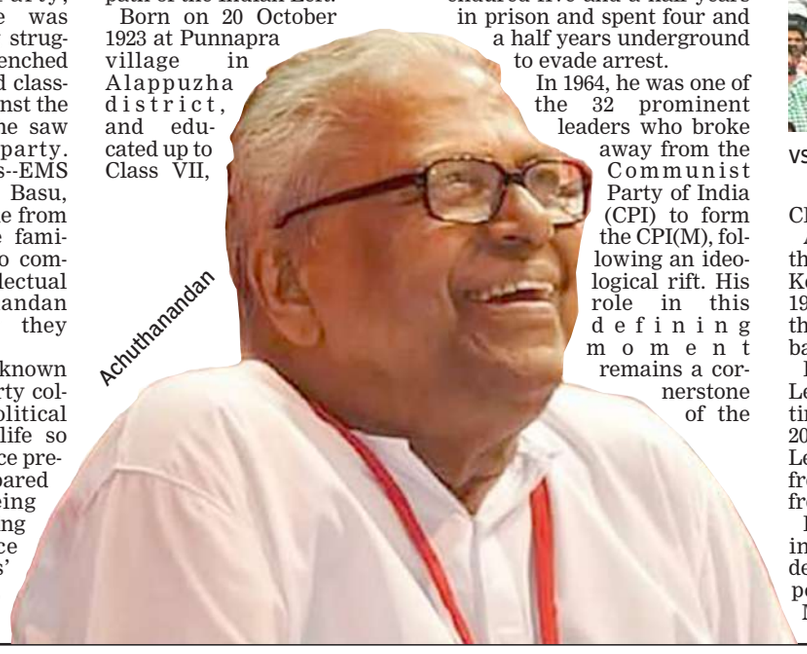
Comrade VS Achuthanandan, a staunch Marxist until his final conscious moments, holds the distinction of being India's first communist leader from a working-class background to rise to the office of Chief Minister.

A founding figure in the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M))after the 1964 split in the undivided Communist Party, Achuthanandan's life was defined by unrelenting struggle -- against the entrenched injustices of a caste and class-bound society, and against the creeping revisionism he saw within his party. Whereas his peers--EMS Namboodiripad, Jyoti Basu, and EK Nayanar -- came from privileged, upper-caste families and were drawn to communism by its intellectual promise, Achuthanandan lived the inequality they fought.

He was affectionately known as Comrade 'VS' by party colleagues and even political opponents and led a life so eventful that he was once presumed dead and prepared for burial after being assaulted by police during a pre-Independence struggle for workers' rights -- only to survive, defy his attackers, and rise to become one of Kerala's most towering political figures.

On Monday, Achuthanandan died at a private hospital here at the age of 101.

For over eight decades, he remained firmly on the side of workers, farmers, and the poor- his politics shaped by the fires of anti-colonial resistance, class struggle, and the complicated, often turbulent path of the Indian Left.



Achuthanandan

Born on 20 October 1923 at Punnapra village in Alappuzha district, and educated up to Class VII, Achuthanandan's political awakening began early.

He entered public life through trade union activism and joined the State Congress in 1939, before embracing Marxism a year later by becoming a member of the Communist Party. His political career was not without its cost. During the British rule and the turbulent post-Independence years, he endured five and a half years in prison and spent four and a half years underground to evade arrest.

In 1964, he was one of the 32 prominent leaders who broke away from the Communist Party of India (CPI) to form the CPI(M), following an ideological rift. His role in this defining moment remains a cornerstone of the CPI(M)'s identity in Kerala.

Achuthanandan served as the secretary of the CPI(M)'s Kerala State Committee from 1980 to 1992, helping to shape the party's strategy and mass base.

He was elected to the Kerala Legislative Assembly four times – in 1967, 1970, 1991, and 2001 – and twice served as the Leader of the Opposition, first from 1992 to 1996, and again from 2001 until 2005.

Despite setbacks, including intra-party disputes that defeated him in 1996 Assembly polls in his home turf, Mararikulam, which kept him from the chief minister's seat, VS remained a beloved and uncompromising leader of the Left. He was known for his sharp rhetoric, anti-corruption stance, and unwavering commitment to social justice.

Achuthanandan's journey, starting as a helper in a tailoring shop, transformed into a string of relentless battles, both within and outside his party, championing people's causes until he rose to the position of chief minister in the state in 2006. As opposition leader, he led a strong campaign against land grabs and the real estate lobby, winning support from people across social and political backgrounds.

A fierce organiser within the CPI(M), Achuthanandan was never afraid of a fight -- not just with political opponents, but often with rivals inside his party. Notable among them is politburo member and present CM Pinarayi Vijayan. In the 1996 Kerala assembly elections, although the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front won, Achuthanandan lost in Mararikulam, a shock defeat in a constituency long seen as his stronghold. The loss was widely blamed on behind-the-scenes moves by his rivals within CPI (M).

Many political observers at the time wrote him off, saying his role in the party and Kerala politics had come to an end, only to be proved wrong. He fought his way back, rebuilt his position within the party, and returned stronger and more popular than ever.

Achuthanandan's deep popularity among the public often placed his party in a difficult position. Despite opposition from the powerful Kannur lobby in the party, led by Vijayan, the CPI(M) was compelled to field him in the 2006 and 2011 assembly elections, thanks to strong grassroots support.

He went on to lead the LDF government from 2006 to 2011, even as some within his party continued efforts to sideline him. His time in office was marked by a tough stance on corruption, a push for transparency, and a focus on welfare schemes aimed at helping ordinary people.

In the 2016 assembly elections, the CPI(M) once again turned to Achuthanandan, presenting him as the face of its campaign. Despite his age, he travelled across the state with energy, delivering fiery speeches in his trademark style and rallying support for the Left. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Pak: 7 dead, 12 injured in Chaman armed clash

CHAMAN, 21 JULY

A deadly armed clash in Chaman exploded on Sunday between two opposing groups, which resulted in the deaths of at least seven persons and injuries to more than twelve others, ARY News reported. According to police sources, one of the critically injured victims succumbed to injuries later, raising the death toll to seven, as per ARY News. The Chaman armed clash took place in the precarious border town of Chaman, located in Balochistan province, near the Afghan frontier. The Chaman armed clash is the latest in a series of violent incidents in the area, which has seen frequent discontent due to tribal arguments and border tensions. *—ANI*

Pak police arrest 11 after Baloch 'honour killing'

KARACHI, 21 JULY

Police in Pakistan have arrested at least 11 people after a video emerged on social media of a couple being shot dead in an apparent honour killing in Balochistan province. The video showed a group of heavily armed men shooting and killing the couple, who were not identified. The incident sparked outrage in the country soon after the video was released on social media, with civil society, religious scholars, and political leaders all calling for the arrest and exemplary punishment for the perpetrators of the gruesome crime. Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti on Monday confirmed that 11 people have been arrested for allegedly being behind the "honour killing". The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan said in a report that in 2024, there were at least 405 victims of recorded honour killing cases in the country. *—PTI*

Kenyan activist Mwangi booked for possessing ammo

NAIROBI, 21 JULY

Prominent Kenyan activist Boniface Mwangi was on Monday charged with unlawful possession of ammunition in a case stemming from his alleged role in street protests against the government. He was freed on bond after appearing in court. The chargesheet said he possessed three canisters of tear gas. The Kenya Human Rights Commission said the ammunition charge was a "trumped-up accusation". Mwangi is a well-known pro-democracy activist in Kenya. On X, where he has 2 million followers, he describes himself as "The People's Watchman." Protestors have recently rocked Kenya, demanding President William Ruto's resignation. *—PTI*

Colombian rebels strike military convoy, kill 3

BOGOTA, 21 JULY

Rebels in northeastern Colombia used a drone to attack a military patrol in a rural area, killing three soldiers and injuring eight, the military said. The army blamed the attack on the National Liberation Army, or ELN, a group of approximately six thousand fighters that has been fighting the Colombian government since the 1960s. The attack took place Sunday outside the town of El Carmen in the Catatumbo region, the military said in a statement. Rebel groups in Colombia are increasingly using drones to attack the military and to attack each other as they fight for control of rural areas. Several smaller rebel groups and drug gangs are now fighting over the control of areas abandoned by the FARC, where illicit activities like drug trafficking and illegal mining is common. *—PTI*

At least 20 people have died, including the pilot of the aircraft, as a Bangladesh Air Force training jet crashes into Milestone College campus, on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

B'desh Air Force jet crashed into Class 3 and Class 4 rooms

Flames erupted just before the final bell

WASHINGTON, 21 JULY

A Bangladesh Air Force training fighter jet crashed into a school building in Dhaka due to a mechanical fault, the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR). At least 20 people, mostly children were killed in the crash, and 171 were injured, at least 50 of whom were in a critical condition.

The plane crashed in front of the classrooms used by Class 3 and Class 4 students.

Fahim Hossain, an eleventh-grade student, said that the jet crashed right in front of his eyes – just 10 feet ahead of him.

"It hit the ground floor of a two-storey building around 1.15pm, where classes for the primary section were taking place," Fahim told The Daily Star.

Recounting the experience, a teacher who was injured in the incident said students were lining up to leave the school just as the final bell rang when the flames erupted.

"There was no warning. Before we even understood what was happening, there were flames all around. Visibility dropped instantly. All I could see was fire, then smoke," the teacher said. "Both of my hands were burnt. I'm also experiencing breathing difficulties, and my face and ears are scorched."

The crash was one of the deadliest aviation accidents in Bangladesh in several decades, Bangla-language daily Prothom Alo reported.

Three platoons of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) have been deployed at the crash site to assist the law enforcement and rescue operations, according to a BGB press release.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus expressed shock and sorrow over the casualties caused by the crash. *—PTI*

Japanese PM's coalition loses majority

TOKYO, 21 JULY

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's ruling coalition suffered a significant defeat in this weekend's upper house election, failing to secure a majority and plunging the government into a minority position in both parliamentary chambers. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior partner Komeito won 47 seats, falling three short of the 50 needed for a majority in the 248-seat upper house, a drop of 19 seats from the previous count.

Shigeru Ishiba *PHOTO: PTI*

Despite the setback, Ishiba pledged to remain in office to address pressing issues such as rising prices and impending US tariffs.

"I must fulfil my responsibility for the country and the people so as not to cause politics to stall," he said.

The election came after the coalition had lost its majority in the lower house last October, weighed down by past corruption scandals and public dissatisfaction. *—PTI*

The UN estimated that some 128,571 people were displaced due the hostilities, in Syria's Swieda *PHOTO: X*

Syrian govt starts evacuating Bedouin from Sweida

BUSRA AL-HARIR, 21 JULY

The Syrian government on Monday started evacuating Bedouin families trapped inside the city of Sweida, where Druze militiamen and Bedouin fighters have clashed for over a week.

Syrian state media said early Sunday that the government had coordinated with some officials in Sweida to bring in buses to evacuate some 1,500 Bedouins in the city. Syrian Interior Minister Ahmad al-Dalati told SANA that the initiative will also allow displaced civilians from Sweida to return, as the fighting has largely stopped and efforts for a complete ceasefire are ongoing

Buses filled with Bedouin families were accompanied by Syrian Arab Red Crescent vehicles and ambulances. Some families left on trucks with their belongings.

The UN estimated that some 128,571 people were displaced due the hostilities that started a week ago. *—PTI*

RAPED WHILE ASLEEP

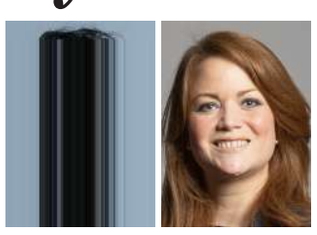
UK MP's ex-wife accuses him of sexually assaulting her

LONDON, 21 JULY

Former British MP Andrew Griffith's ex-wife Kate Kniveton alleged that the he sexually assaulted her while she slept, screamed at their newborn, and dismissed her threats to report him, saying, "Nobody would believe you."

Kniveton, who served as Burton's MP from 2019 to 2024, has spoken for the first time about the abuse she endured during her marriage, and said that she often cried during the assaults and recounted instances where Griffith's anger led to him physically kicking her out of bed.

The 54-year-old politician also spoke out about the ongoing abuse many survivors endure even after leaving abusive relationships, highlighting how family courts often fail to protect vulnerable children. Kniveton said that he once yelled at their newborn daughter to "shut the f*** up" when she cried for a feed.



Andrew Griffiths and Kate Kniveton *PHOTOS: WIKIPEDIA*

"People don't think it can happen to professional middle-class people - but domestic abuse has no boundaries, it can affect absolutely anybody. When I was elected, I made a promise to be an advocate for victims of domestic abuse," she said.

Griffiths, once a women's rights campaigner and chief of staff to former prime minister Theresa May in 2006, was dismissed from his government role after sending over 2,000 sexually explicit messages to two female constituents in three weeks. In December 2021, a family court judge ruled that he had raped and repeatedly assaulted his wife. *—Agencies*

UPS THE ANTE

Trump posts AI-video of FBI arresting Obama

WASHINGTON, 21 JULY

US President Donald Trump shared an AI-generated video of former president Barack Obama being arrested by FBI agents in the Oval Office, with the caption "no one is above the law". Trump's move comes a few days after Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard called for Obama and former senior US National Security officials to be prosecuted for a "treacherous conspiracy" claiming that Trump's 2016 election win was due to Russian interferences.

In the AI clip Trump shared, Obama is heard saying "especially the President is above the law," as two FBI agents handcuff him, followed by a montage of various US leaders asserting, "no one is above the law." The video ends with shots of Obama dressed in an orange jumpsuit sitting, and pacing inside a jail.

On Friday, Gabbard, a former Democratic lawmaker, called for Obama administration to be "prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," claiming officials "manufactured" intelligence to claim that Russia interfered in the 2016 election to boost Trump's presidential campaign.

Gabbard, her press release claims, declassified documents that "revealed overwhelming evidence" allegedly showing Obama and national security officials "manufactured and politicised intelligence to lay the groundwork for what was essentially a years-long coup against President Trump."

The Obama administration's "goal was to usurp President Trump and subvert the will of the American people," Gabbard posted on X. *—ANI*

A screengrab from the AI video shows former US president Barack Obama arrested by the FBI *PHOTO: DONALD TRUMP/TRUTH SOCIAL*

Off-duty border patrol agent shot at in NYC

NEW YORK, 21 JULY

An off-duty US Customs and Border Protection officer was shot at in a Manhattan park on Saturday after an apparent robbery gone wrong, New York City police and federal officials said.

The 42-year-old officer was in stable condition Sunday and expected to survive.

The officer, who was not in uniform, had been sitting with a woman in a park when two men approached him. The officer, who realised he was being robbed, and drew his service weapon and exchanged gunfire with one of the robbers. The off-duty officer was shot in the face and arm while the perpetrator was injured before he and his accomplice escaped.

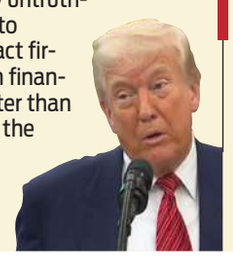
A person of interest -- Miguel Mora, a 21-year-old undocumented immigrant with an extensive criminal past -- was taken into custody after arriving at a hospital with gunshot wounds to the groin and leg.

In a social media post, President Donald Trump used the incident as evidence to target immigrants.

"They must all be thrown out or, in some cases, immediately prosecuted in that we cannot take a chance that they are able to come back. That's how evil and dangerous they are!" Trump said. *—PTI*

Trump slams WSJ report about the firing of Fed chief

Trump again criticised a Wall Street Journal (WSJ) report that claimed Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had tried to stop him from firing Federal Reserve Chair Jerome. Trump called the story "typically untruthful" and said no one had to explain to him what impact firing Powell would have on financial markets. "I know better than anybody what's good for the Market, and what's good for the USA," he said on Truth Social.



US allots USD 500 million to Taiwan's defences

The House of Representatives on Friday passed the Department of Defence Appropriations Act, 2026, which includes USD 500 million for Taiwan, Focus Taiwan reported on Sunday. As per the report by Focus Taiwan, the Bill, which totals USD 831.5 billion in discretionary spending, passed in a 221-209 vote. As per the Bill, the funds for Taiwan would be administered by the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency and will remain available through 30 Sept, 2027, for the Taiwan Security Cooperation Initiative.

Russia launches major aerial assault on Kyiv amid NATO talks

KYIV, 21 JULY

Ukraine was hit by one of the largest aerial assaults in recent months, with attacks claiming two lives and injuring 15, including a 12-year-old child. This overnight drone and missile strike underscored the urgent need for Western military support, particularly in air defence, just hours before a pivotal NATO allies meeting discussing US President Donald Trump's arms proposal for Ukraine.

British Defence Secretary John Healey and German counterpart Boris Pistorius are set to lead the virtual meeting, involving senior US officials and NATO leaders. Moscow's intensified long-range assaults on Ukrainian cities have raised concerns over escalating attacks as Russian drone production expands.

Trump's arms strategy suggests European nations supply American weapons to Ukraine through NATO, with deliveries potentially starting "within days." However, various officials have indicated that no transfers are currently underway.

As Ukraine awaits advanced air defence systems like the Patriot, NATO coordination for other military aid, including ammunition and artillery, continues. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has proposed new peace talks, with Istanbul likely as the host city, although no date has been set yet amid ongoing hostilities. *—PTI*

Firefighters work in a destroyed apartment building after a Russian attack in Kyiv, Ukraine *PHOTO PTI*

Iran set to discuss nuclear programme with E3

TEHRAN, 21 JULY

Iran has reportedly reached an agreement in principle to engage in talks with the UK, France, and Germany regarding its nuclear programme, according to the semi-official Tasnim news agency.

The discussions, which are scheduled for Friday at the level of deputy foreign ministers, will be separate from the ongoing indirect negotiations with the United States, as reported by Iran's state-run IRIB News.

The three European nations, collectively known as the E3, are signatories to the original nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), from which US President Donald Trump withdrew in 2018. Axios has indicated that the E3 and Iran are expected to meet in Europe next week to explore a potential agreement.

Efforts to revive the nuclear deal have stalled since 13 June, when Israel conducted an attack on Iran just ahead of a planned sixth round of Oman-mediated talks between Tehran and Washington. Iran had been involved in separate but limited discussions with the E3 and the EU. *—Agencies*

- The UK, France and Germany, collectively known as the E3, are signatories to the original nuclear agreement JCPOA

25 COUNTRIES CALL FOR GAZA CEASEFIRE

TEL AVIV, 21 JULY

Twenty-five countries including Britain, France and a host of European nations issued a joint statement on Monday saying the war in Gaza "must end now" and Israel must comply with international law.

The countries including Australia, Canada Japan, New Zealand, and the EU Commissioner for Equality Preparedness and Crisis Management said, "the suffering of civilians in Gaza has reached new depths". It said, "The drip feeding of aid and the inhumane killing of civilians, including children, seeking to meet their most basic needs of water and food. The Israeli government's aid delivery model is dangerous, fuels instability and deprives Gazans of human dignity."

US and Germany did not sign the statement.

This comes the Israel Defence Forces on Sunday stated that they had killed Bashar Thabet, a commander in Hamas' Development and Projects Department within its weapons production headquarter. Thabet was reportedly responsible for research and development in Hamas' weapons manufacturing apparatus.

Israel also started massive air raids and ground operations targeting Deir al-Balah, the key region for humanitarian aid.

The Israeli military killed at least 115 Palestinians, including 92 aid seekers and two civil defence aid workers, and wounded more than 200 people, Al Jazeera reported. Gaza's Health Ministry said the Palestinian death toll surpassed 59,000 after 21 months of war.—*Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold prices rise by Rs 250 to Rs 99,020/10g

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Gold prices rose by Rs 250 to Rs 99,020 per 10g in the national capital on Monday amid a pick-up in demand by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. On Friday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 98,770 per 10g. In the national capital, gold of 99.5 per cent purity advanced by Rs 250 to Rs 98,550 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Monday. It had closed at Rs 98,300 per 10g in the previous market close. Meanwhile, silver prices appreciated Rs 500 to Rs 1,11,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). Globally, spot gold rose by USD 15.16 or 0.45 per cent to USD 3,365.56 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee falls by 14P, closes at 86.30 against USD

MUMBAI, 21 JULY

The rupee depreciated 14 paise to close at 86.30 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday due to consistent dollar demand from oil importers. Forex traders said after breaching the crucial 86 level, the rupee continued its decline, which intensified the downward trend, tracking a strengthening dollar index. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 86.27 against the greenback and touched an intra-day high of 86.19 and a low of 86.36 against the greenback. At the end of Monday's trading session, the local unit settled at 86.30, down 14 paise over its previous closing price. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.22 per cent to 98.26.*—PTI*

MedGenome secures $47.5M in series E funding

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Genomic diagnostics and research company MedGenome has raised USD 47.5 million (over Rs 409 crore) in a series E funding round led by private equity firm Maj Invest and existing investor Novo Holdings. Current shareholder Sofina also participated, the Bengaluru-based firm said in a statement. The funds will help MedGenome expand access to its genomics and integrated diagnostics services across India and other emerging markets. "This investment reflects the growing role of genomics in personalised and preventive healthcare across India and similar economies," said CEO Vedam Ramprasad. MedGenome offers more than 1,300 advanced genetic tests across key areas such as oncology, inherited and reproductive disorders, infectious diseases, and preventive wellness.*—PTI*

India-Kuwait sign MoU to boost air services capacity

DUBAI, 21 JULY

Kuwait and India have formalised a new air services agreement aimed at increasing weekly air capacity by 50 per cent. The Gulf News reports that this partnership will enable airline operators to raise the number of seats available to 18,000 per week in each direction. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by Sheikh Hamoud Mubarak Al Sabah, President of Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation, and Samir Kumar Sinha, India's Civil Aviation Secretary. This marks the first expansion of bilateral air rights since 2006, when capacity was increased from 8,320 seats. Sheikh Hamoud Al Sabah remarked that the agreement reflects ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation between the two nations in the civil aviation sector, aiming to cater to evolving traveller expectations. *—ANI*

SEBI allows Jane Street to resume trade in India

JS deposited around Rs 4,843.50 crore as escrow account

MUMBAI, 21 JULY

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has allowed US proprietary trading firm Jane Street to resume trading in the Indian stock markets following the US firm deposited USD 567 million, according to a source based report by news agency Reuters.

There has not been any official update regarding the same by the Indian market regulator. Quoting sources Reuters added in its report that the market regulator has sent an email to the firm on Friday in which it said that following the deposit of the money the restrictions imposed by its interim order are no longer applicable.

Additionally, the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd and The Bombay Stock Exchange Ltd have been asked to closely look at the activity of the US-based quant trading firm.

NSE and BSE have been asked to closely look at the activity of the US-based quant trading firm PHOTO: X

Both exchanges are yet to facilitate Jane Street's buying and selling of Indian securities, said one of the Reuters sources.

"While the firm has been allowed to resume trading in India, it has given an undertaking to SEBI that it will not trade in options. The firm also does not intend to trade in cash till it has explained its trades to SEBI," the second source said.

In the background, Jane Street Capital deposited approximately Rs 4,843.50 crore in an escrow account and requested market regulator, the SEBI to allow them to resume trading in the Indian stock markets.

Last week, SEBI stated through a press release that Jane Street has deposited the alleged illegal gains of Rs 4843.50 crores and requested the regulator to allow them trade in the Indian markets.

SEBI in its last press release on 14 July, said that the request by Jane Street is currently under examination in accordance with directions of the interim order. *—ANI*

SC junks BCCI & Raveendran's plea on settlement for Byju's

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

The Supreme Court on Monday upheld an order rejecting the appeals of the BCCI and Byju's co-founder Riju Raveendran seeking withdrawal of insolvency proceedings against his company.

A bench comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan dismissed the appeals filed by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Raveendran challenging the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) verdict on 17 April.

BCCI and Raveendran had previously challenged an order of the Bengaluru bench of the National Company Law Tribunal, which on February 10 directed to place their settlement offer before the new Committee of Creditors (CoC), in which US-based Glas Trust, trustee for lenders to which Byju's owes USD 1.2 billion, is a member.

A two-member Chennai bench of the NCLAT comprising Justice Rakesh Kumar Jain and Jatindranath Swain upheld the directions passed by the NCLT and said the settlement proposal was filed after the formation of CoC, hence as the provisions of Section 12 A of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, it requires the approval of the lender's body.

Both BCCI and Raveendran contended since the application under Section 12A was filed before the constitution of the CoC, the provisions of Section 12A coupled with Regulation 30A(1)(a), shall apply and not Regulation 30A(1)(b). BCCI & Byju's contended Form FA, which is an application for withdrawal of Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process, was submitted before the formation of CoC of Byju's.

However, rejecting the plea NCLAT said, "Form FA, admittedly having been filed on 14 November, 2024, is post (formation of) CoC." *—PTI*

L&T to build India's largest green hydrogen plant

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Infrastructure major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Monday said its arm will set up the nation's largest green hydrogen plant at Indian Oil Corporation's Panipat Refinery in Haryana.

The project aligns with the National Green Hydrogen Mission, which aims to position India as a global hub for green hydrogen production and technology. The plant, to be set up by L&T's wholly-owned arm L&T Energy GreenTech Ltd, will supply 10,000 tonnes of green hydrogen per year to Indian Oil Corporation Ltd for 25 years, supporting Centre's National Green Hydrogen Mission.

The plant, developed under a build-own-operate model, will operate round the clock using green energy. *—PTI*

ED issues summons to Meta, Google officials

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Executives of tech giants Meta and Google did not depose before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as scheduled on Monday and have now been given fresh summons for 28 July in a money laundering case linked to promotion of "illegal" online betting and gambling platforms, official sources said.

It is understood that the representatives of the two companies sought deferment of the 21 July summons, saying they need time to collect relevant information and documents before they present themselves for questioning and recording of their statements at the federal probe agency.

Sources said the executives have been given a one-week extension and asked to depose on 28 July.

Once they depose, their statements will be recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said.

There was no immediate response from the two companies.

ED is probing multiple platforms hosting illegal betting and gambling links, including instances of advertisements placed for them on various social media outlets & app stores. *—PTI*

Mkts up after two days of fall

MUMBAI, 21 JULY

Benchmark BSE Sensex surged by 442 points while Nifty closed above the 25,000 level on Monday following buying in blue-chip private banking shares HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank after their quarterly earnings.

Snapping the two-day falling streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 442.61 points or 0.54 per cent to settle at 82,200.34. During the day, it surged 516.3 points or 0.63 per cent to 82,274.03.

The 50-share NSE Nifty jumped 122.30 points or 0.49 per cent to 25,090.70. The 50-issue index had slid below the 25,000 mark to settle near a month's low on Friday. Among Sensex firms, Eternal surged the most by 5.38 per cent post its first quarter numbers.

ICICI Bank jumped 2.76 per cent after the company posted a 15.9 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit for the June quarter to Rs 13,558 crore compared to Rs 11,696 crore in the year-ago period.

HDFC Bank climbed 2.19 per cent despite the firm reporting a 1.31 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to Rs 16,258 crore for the June 2025 quarter.

Mahindra & Mahindra, Bharat Electronics, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Tata Motors were also among the gainers.

However, India's most valuable company Reliance Industries declined 3.29 per cent even after the firm reported its highest-ever quarterly profit of Rs 26,994 crore for the April-June quarter, reflecting a growth of 78.3 per cent over the year-ago period.

HCL Tech, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Consultancy Services and ITC were also among the laggards. *—PTI*

Reliance shares drop nearly 3% post Q1 earnings

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Shares of Reliance Industries fell nearly 3 per cent on Monday morning, as investors engaged in profit-taking after the company posted record April–June earnings.

The stock dropped 2.70 per cent to Rs 1,436.85 on the BSE and 2.64 per cent to Rs 1,437 on NSE.

India's most valuable company reported a record net profit of Rs 26,994 crore for Q1 FY26, up 78.3 per cent year-on-year and 39 per cent quarter-on-quarter.

This included Rs 8,924 crore from the sale of listed investments. Revenue rose 5.26 per cent to Rs 2.48 lakh crore compared to same period last year.

Strong growth in its consumer-facing businesses — retail and telecom supported the results. Jio benefited from a growing subscriber base, while retail saw increased footfall across an expanded store network.

V K Vijayakumar of Geojit called the performance "steady," despite the stock reacting negatively in early trade. *—PTI*

INDIA BECOMES MALAYSIA'S TOP OIL PALM SEED BUYER

KUALA LUMPUR, 21 JULY

India has emerged as Malaysia's largest importer of germinated oil palm seeds, with demand surging as the country accelerates efforts to boost domestic palm oil production and reduce import dependency.

India imported 3.03 million tonnes of palm oil from Malaysia in 2024, representing 17.9 per cent of Malaysia's total palm oil exports and making it the top destination for Malaysian palm oil.

"There has been a noticeable increase in demand for Malaysian oil palm seeds, particularly from India," Malaysian Palm Oil Board Director General Ahmad Parveez Ghulam Kadir told PTI, citing India's push to expand domestic production.

PHOTO: X

India aims to rapidly expand palm oil cultivation to 1 million hectares by 2025-26 and achieve nearly 2.8 million tonnes of crude palm oil production by 2029-30 under its Edible Oils-Oil Palm scheme.

The country currently has about 3,70,000 hectares under palm oil cultivation as of mid-2025. *—PTI*

Brigade Hotel to launch Rs 760 cr IPO

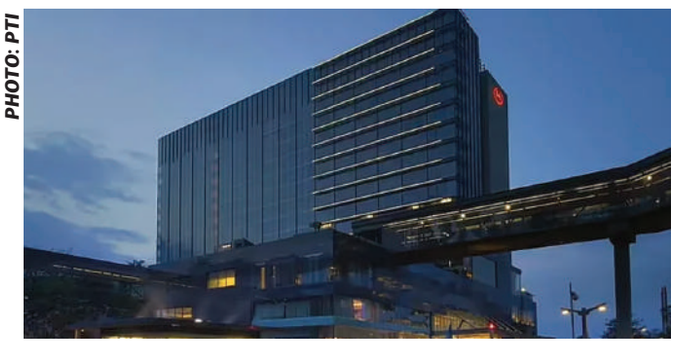
NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Brigade Hotel Ventures Ltd, a subsidiary of Brigade Enterprises Ltd, is set to launch its Rs 760 crore public offering this week, having established a price band of Rs 85-90 per share.

The IPO will open from 24 July to 28 July.

At the upper end of the price band, Brigade Hotel Ventures is valued at over Rs 3,400 crore. The company, which operates nine hotels across South India with a total of 1,604 keys, reported a revenue of Rs 468.25 crore for the 2024-25 financial year. The funds raised through the IPO will be used primarily to pay off Rs 468.14 crore in debt, while Rs 107.52 crore will be allocated for acquiring land from its parent firm, Brigade Enterprises. Remaining funds will support acquisitions, strategic initiatives, and general corporate purposes.

PHOTO: PTI



Earlier this month, Brigade Hotel Ventures secured Rs 126 crore from the sale of equity shares to 360 ONE Alternates Asset Management. The company operates hotels under prestigious brands. *—PTI*

LAYOFFS EXPECTED

TCS' benching policy keeps staff on the edge

BENGALURU, 21 JULY

India's largest IT services provider, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), is keeping their employees on the edge of their seats with its recent implementation of the first round of benching policies, the report said.

According to the report, the benching policies, effective from 12 July, states that employees should be billed for 225 days a year and the non-billable period will be limited to 35 days.

What this means is that the longest an employee can stay on the bench without taking up projects or being assigned to a client is 35 days in a year.

Employees are voicing their concerns on online platforms, as the policies could cause major professional issues or lead to job loss, the report added.

Presently, TCS has about 6,13,000 employees PHOTO: TATA

The implementation of these polices has caused the employees to take up various tasks, among some of which do not align with their work skills, it said.

According to sources, K Krithivasan, the Chief Executive and Managing Director of TCS, while explaining the benching policy, said, "It's always been expected that associates take responsibility for their careers."

He added that the associates should actively look for new tasks after finishing their existing ones and that the company is aiming for low bench time.

The report said that a few of the employees are supporting the company's decision.

As of now, how the workforce will be affected remains uncertain, the report added.

Presently, TCS has about 6,13,000 employees.

The report said that other IT companies may follow along TCS's path on implementation of the bench policies, as AI usage rises, the challenge of managing bench strength also increases. *—Agencies*

CoinDCX launches recovery bounty after $44.2M theft

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Indian cryptocurrency exchange CoinDCX has announced a Recovery Bounty Programme following a theft of USD 44.2 million (approximately Rs 378 crore).

The platform is offering rewards of up to 25 per cent of any recovered funds to individuals who provide information that aids in retrieving the stolen assets and identifying the culprits.

The initiative aims to engage ethical hackers, white-hat researchers, and partners within the Web3 community, promoting a collective effort against cybercrime.

CoinDCX stated, "Up to 25 per cent of all successfully recovered funds will be awarded to partners who significantly contribute to the recovery and assist in the identification and prosecution of the attackers."

In the event of a full recovery, the potential bounty could reach USD 11 million.

The company's security systems detected unauthorised access to one of its accounts linked to a partner exchange on Saturday, leading to the significant financial exposure.

Co-founders Sumit Gupta and Neeraj Khandelwal reassured customers that the total loss would be absorbed entirely by CoinDCX, using its own treasury reserves, and confirmed no customer funds were impacted. *—PTI*

Nitish ruled out of Eng tour, Arshdeep unavailable for 4th Test

MANCHESTER, 21 JULY

India all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy has been ruled out of the remainder of the series against England due to a knee injury, while injured pacer Arshdeep Singh will be unavailable for selection for the fourth Test, the BCCI said on Monday.

Reddy, who featured in the second and third Tests, picked up the injury while training in the gym on Sunday, with scans revealing ligament damage.

"Nitish Kumar Reddy has been ruled out of the remaining two Tests owing to a left knee injury. Nitish will fly back home, and the team wishes him a speedy recovery," the BCCI said in a press release.

Arshdeep, who is yet to feature in the series, sustained an impact injury to his left thumb while bowling in the nets during a training session in Beckenham last week. "The BCCI Medical Team is monitoring his progress," the statement read.

Haryana seamer Anshul Kamboj has been added to the squad as cover, and he has already linked up with the squad in Manchester.

The fourth Test is slated to begin at Old Trafford on Wednesday. Hosts England lead the five-match Anderson Tendulkar Trophy 2-1.

India's updated squad for fourth Test. —*PTI*

ICC forms working committee to explore two-tier Test system

LONDON, 21 JULY

An eight-member working group, headed by ICC's new chief executive officer Sanjog Gupta, has been formed by the game's global governing body to explore the possibility of restructuring Test cricket into a two-tier system. The committee was set up during ICC's annual general meeting in Singapore on Monday under the all-Indian leadership of the chair, Jay Shah, and

Gupta, who was appointed as CEO earlier this month.

Other members of the panel include England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chief executive Richard Gould and the Cricket Australia (CA) chief executive Todd Greenberg, according to a report in 'The Guardian'. "Any changes would be introduced for the next cycle of the World Test Championship, due to run from 2027 to 2029, and involve an expansion from the current nine-team format to two divisions of six," the report read.

The working party has been asked to submit its recommendations to the board by the end of the year. —*PTI*

India to host chess World Cup in October-November

India last hosted the event in 2002 in Hyderabad

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

India will host this year's chess World Cup from 30 October to 27 November, with a host city for the event to be named in "due course", the sport's global governing body FIDE announced on Monday.

The tournament will see 206 players battling for the coveted title and qualification spots in the 2026 FIDE Candidates Tournament. India last hosted the event in 2002 in Hyderabad, where Viswanathan Anand won the title.

The players will compete in a knockout format, where the losing player in each round is eliminated.

"The event has used several formats over the years, but since 2021, it has followed a single-elimination format. Each round spans three days: two classical games on the first two days, followed by tiebreaks on the third day, if necessary," FIDE stated.

In the first round, the top 50 players receive byes, while players seeded from 51 to 206 compete, with pairings based on the principle of the top half versus the reversed lower half.

"The top three finishers of the 2025 World Cup will earn direct qualification for the 2026 Candidates Tournament, which determines the challenger for the World Chess Championship," FIDE said.

Reigning world champion D Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa, the runner-up of the 2023 World Cup, and Arjun Erigaisi, currently ranked world number five, are among the stars who would be seen in action. —*PTI*

Freestyle Chess: Arjun finishes 6th, Praggu 7th

LAS VEGAS, 21 JULY

Indian stars Arjun Erigaisi and R Praggnanandhaa finished in sixth and seventh position respectively, even as Grandmaster Levon Aronian of the United States reigned supreme in the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam here.

Aronian survived some anxious moments before defeating compatriot Hans Moke Niemann 1.5-0.5 in the finals of the tournament.

World number one Magnus Carlsen of Norway also had a similar experience as he rallied after a disappointing first game to outplay Hikaru Nakamura of the United States in the third-place play-off.

Arjun went down 0-2 to Fabiano Caruana of the US, while Praggnanandhaa defeated another American, Wesley So,o 1.5-0.5 to clinch the seventh spot among the last eight remaining participants in this event.

Aronian took home USD 200000 for winning the tournament, while Arjun got USD 40000 for his effort. Praggnanandhaa made sure he wasn't far behind as he pocketed a total of USD 30000 after his final round win.—*PTI*

WI VS AUSTRALIA 1ST TWENTY20I

Owen, Cameron Green's fifties, put Australia 1-0 up

KINGSTON, 21 JULY

Mitchell Owen marked his international debut with a half-century and a wicket to help Australia to a three-wicket win in the Twenty20 cricket series opener against the West Indies.

Owen shared an 80-run fifth-wicket stand off 40 deliveries with Cameron Green, who scored 51 off 26 balls, to put Australia on course to reach the victory target of 190 with seven balls to spare on Sunday. After being sent in to bat and making a flying start, West Indies was restricted to 189-8 after losing four wickets for five runs off the last nine balls. Australian fast bowler Ben Dwarshuis returned a career-best 4-36, taking three wickets in four deliveries. Jason Holder blocked a hat-trick ball but was out next delivery in the next-to-last over of the West Indies innings. The top four West Indies batters all got starts, with Roston Chase plundering 60 from 32 deliveries before he was caught in the deep off Dwarshuis' bowling to end a 91-run second-wicket partnership with Shai Hope (55) in the 13th over. Another win has given Australia, coming off a 3-0 test series sweep, an early

lead in the five-game T20 series. Owen, a Tasmanian allrounder who opened the batting with success for the Hobart Hurricanes in the domestic T20 league last season, joined David Warner and Ricky Ponting as Australians who've scored a half-century on debut in the format.

"Firstly, happy we got the win, it was nice to contribute," he said. "Just nice to be mentioned with those class players." The 23-year-old allrounder's first scoring shot was a six straight down the ground against Andre Russell in a contest between a player on international debut against a veteran playing his next-to-last game. He also clouted the last ball of that over for six.

Australia 190 for 7 (Green 51, Owen 50, Motie 2-29, Holder 2-32, A Joseph 2-39) beat West Indies (Chase 60, Hope 55, Dwarshuis 4-36) by three wickets. —*PTI*

WUG: Six Indian badminton players barred

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

The Indian badminton squad that won the mixed team bronze medal at the ongoing World University Games in Rhine-Ruhr, Germany, has been hit by a controversy over selection after six of the 12 chosen players were barred from participating due to an alleged administrative lapse.

Twelve players were selected and sent to represent India, but only six were allowed to compete as officials failed to submit all names correctly during the managers' meeting on 16 July. "The names of players who hadn't attended trials were there. They came here only to enjoy. In the meeting, they also made a basic mistake. They were supposed to declare which player would play singles, doubles, and mixed, but didn't process it properly."

Saneeth Dayanand, Sathish Kumar Karunakaran, Devika Sihag, Tasnim Mir, Varshini Viswanath Sri, and Vaishnavi Khadkekar were the six who competed in the mixed team event.

"This is not just mismanagement – it's career sabotage. We demand answers, accountability, and that our voices be heard. We didn't lose a match – we lost our right to even participate," wrote Alisha Khan, one of the players left out, on Instagram.

"This isn't just a mistake. It's career sabotage by AIU and our team officials. We demand justice."

According to sources, BV Rao and Ajit Mohan were the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) officials who attended the meeting. The AIU, which is the nodal body for university-level sports in the country, acknowledged the incident.

"We have been informed about this and the matter is being investigated," AIU Secretary Dr Pankaj Mittal told PTI while refusing to comment any further. —*PTI*

Bumrah will play, confirms Siraj

MANCHESTER, 21 JULY

India pacer Mohammed Siraj on Monday confirmed Jasprit Bumrah's participation in the fourth Test beginning at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

Bumrah, who has been earmarked to play in three Tests out of five due to workload management, had missed the second Test at Edgbaston that India won handsomely before returning for the following game at Lord's, which was lost by 22 runs.

With India trailing 1-2 and the series on the line, former India captain Anil Kumble had recently spoken about the need to play the star pacer in the last two Tests. Following the team's first outdoor session in Manchester, Siraj at least cleared the suspense over Bumrah's availability for the fourth Test."Jassi bhai will play as far as I know. Our combination is changing day by day (due to injuries)," Siraj told reporters. —*PTI*

INDIA PRACTICE

India's Jasprit Bumrah and KL Rahul during a practice session ahead of the fourth test cricket match between India and England, at the Old Trafford Cricket Ground, in Manchester on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Italy is one win away from women's Euro final

ROME, 21 JULY

Italy is one win away from reaching the final of the Women's European Championship, but just three years ago, its players couldn't even get professional contracts in their own country. Little wonder veteran captain Cristiana Girelli was in tears after her two goals ins pired Italy to a 2-1 victory over Norway last week, and a first semifinal appearance at the tournament in 28 years. The Azzurre next plays defending champion England on Tuesday in Geneva. "It's a great joy to be among t h e top four in Europe, and it is a happiness that we want to share because we know how important it is to bring home the results in Italy and especially for the new generations," Girelli said, after again wiping the tears from her eyes. "Because we do this for our glory, b u t there is a much deeper meaning, which we certainly want to bring. —*PTI*

McIlroy falls short in bid to crown British Open

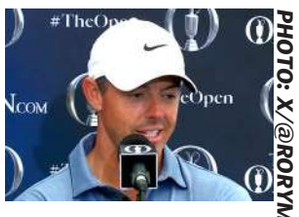


PHOTO: X/@RORYMCILROY

PORTRUSH, 21 JULY

They were all over the Dunluce Links again Sunday, those passionate supporters of Rory McIlroy cheering on their favorite son in the final act of his homecoming, whether they were watching him or not. The big disappointment for McIlroy was that he couldn't deliver what they craved. "It's been an awesome week," McIlroy said after shooting 2-under 69 to tie for seventh at the British Open. "I've gotten everything I wanted out of this week, apart from a claret jug, and that's just because one person was just a little bit better than the rest of us." That might be an understatement. Scheffler, the world No. 1, won by four shots to capture his fourth major title. He was seven strokes clear of McIlroy and playing on a different level in this pretty corner of Northern Ireland.—*PTI*

Venus will make her return from a 16-month layoff

NEW YORK, 21 JULY

Venus Williams will make her return from a 16-month layoff at this week's DC Open, the seven-time Grand Slam singles champion saying Sunday she is not sure of anything beyond that. The 45-year-old American overcame a serious health scare last year and, after enjoying a visit to Wimbledon, decided to accept a wildcard into the US capital tournament, the first hardcourt tuneup for the US Open. "I think I know what I want to do, but I don't always want to talk about it," Williams said., "I'm just here for now. And who knows? Maybe there is more. I hold my cards close, but at the moment, I'm focused just on this." Williams will open against 23-year-old American Peyton Stearns, ranked 34th in the world.—*PTI*

Scheffler re-writes records to win maiden British Open

PORTRUSH, 21 JULY

American Scottie Scheffler completed a dominant week with a final round 3-under 68 to win British Open. Indian-American golfer Akshay Bhatia, who played all four Majors for the second straight year, achieved one of his best results in a Major as he finished tied 30th at the 153rd British Open at Portrush. The 23-year-old shot a final round with a 2-under 69 that had four birdies against two bogeys. His rounds of 73-68-70-69 saw him total 4-under for the week. The Indo-British Aaron Rai, who was among the leaders after nine holes on the first day, ended tied 34th and showed consistency in making all four cuts at the Majors this year. It was his seventh straight cut in a Major and his third cut in four starts at the Open. Rai finished with 2-under 69, and his rounds of 69-72-71 —*PTI*

With AC uncertain, PCB's revenue could be massively hit

KARACHI, 21 JULY

With the future of this year's Asia Cup T20 tournament mired in uncertainty, the Pakistan Cricket Board is bracing for a severe hit to its revenue. The Pakistan Cricket Board is expecting to earn an estimated 8.8 billion rupees this year from its share of the revenue from the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Asian Cricket Council (ACC). According to details coming from a reliable Board source, the PCB has outlined an amount of USD 25.9 million (approximately 7.7 billion rupees) during this fiscal year as its share from the ICC. The Board is hoping to earn another 1.16 billion rupees from the Asia Cup and 7.77 million rupees through other international cricket events.—*PTI*

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Satwik-Chirag eye a strong start at China Open

CHANGZHOU, 21 JULY

India's top men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will aim to build momentum for the upcoming World Championships when they compete at the China Open Super 1000 badminton tournament starting here on Tuesday. The China Open is the last major event before the World Championships, scheduled from August 25 to 31 in Paris, and all players will be hoping to register some wins to build confidence ahead of the prestigious tournament. Currently ranked world No. 15, Satwik and Chirag have reached three semifinals this season, including the Malaysia and India Open in January, but their progress was stalled by Satwik's health concerns and Chirag's back injury, which kept them out for several weeks. On their return, the duo made the semifinals at the Singapore Open and the quarterfinals at the Indonesia Open. However, they suffered a setback last week, losing to Paris Olympic silver medallists China's Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang at the Japan Open.

The former world No. 1 pair will look to bounce back quickly when they open against Japan's Kenya Mitsuhashi and Hiroki Okamura. In singles, Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy, and PV Sindhu will hope to regain form at the USD 2,000,000 event. Lakshya, currently ranked 18, has struggled with consistency this season, managing only a quarterfinal finish at the All England. —*PTI*

Task cut out for India Women in series-decider

CHESTER-LE-STREET, 21 JULY

Coming off a mediocre outing thanks to their injudicious shot selection in the testing conditions at Lord's, India will have their task cut out when they face a rejuvenated England in the series-deciding third Women's ODI here on Tuesday.

Visiting India produced a fine display with the bat to win the first match by four wickets, but came a cropper in a rain-curtailed game in the British capital on Saturday to leave the three-match series evenly poised at 1-1 heading into the final ODI. The series holds significance for both teams as the World Cup is scheduled to start in two months. The marquee 50-over women's tournament kicks off on September 30, with five cities across Sri Lanka and India playing host. India came into the second game with their nose ahead and were expected to grab the series due to their all-around strength and the form of some big players. However, poor shot selection and an inability to adapt to the conditions spoiled their plans as they struggled to 143 for eight batting first in a 29-overs-a-side contest. —*PTI*